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AN
EXAMINATION
OF
THE PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

Thoughts on the English Government,

ADDRESSED TO

THE QUIET GOOD SENSE

OF THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

BY

JOSEPH MOSER, *N*

AUTHOR OF TIMOTHY TWIG, &c. &c. &c.

Good Sense, which only is the gift of Heaven,
And tho' no Science, fairly worth the Seven.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. OWEN, NO. 168, PICCADILLY.

1796.



AN

EXAMINATION, &c.

I OBSERVE that the Author, whoever he may be, of "Thoughts on the English Government," begins his work with an appeal to the "quiet good sense of the people of this island;" and certainly no work had ever a more rational or dispassionate commencement. The first pages are taken up with an enquiry into the nature and operation of that "good sense" with which the natives of England are said to abound; they are a disquisition of its properties and effects, and seem to be the crude elements upon which a systematic process is about to be formed, in which the original matter shall be analyzed, its component parts dissected, and the uses or abuses of it completely investigated.

In an enquiry of this nature, it was necessary for the Author, not only to take into consideration how the agent, *good sense*, acts, but how it is *acted upon*. Therefore, whether it has kept firm possession of the throne, it has erected in the human mind, and defied all the storms that have been *artfully* raised to agitate the passions; or whether, assailed on all sides by falsehood and misrepresentation, it has suffered itself to be shaken from its seat, and perverted from its original purpose by the machinations of political demagogues; it is, as I apprehend, the tendency of this work to discover.

Perhaps there has never been an æra that abounded so much with speculations upon government as the present; the

makers of new constitutions have been in this age as sedulously employed, as the founders of new religions were in the last; every day has teemed with systems which wanted nothing but practicability to compleat their excellence; but in that respect it hath, alas! been found, that those that have been tried have failed; and failed for a reason so obvious, that I wonder the ingenious speculators overlooked it, namely, that they wanted a part essentially necessary to render government permanent, that is to say, A MONARCH!

The Author, whose work I am now examining, unquestionably observed this defect; and thinking he had certainly as great a right to speculate on one side the question, as his *patriotic* antagonists had on the other, has done what any man of abilities, much reading, great loyalty, and observation, might have done: he has entered into a deep consideration of these matters, and seeing with what ardour persons, to whom a revolution *must* be gain, were endeavouring to propagate republican principles, he has stood forth to counteract their nefarious designs; not with a view, as hath been insidiously insinuated, to exalt *one* branch of the legislature above the other, but by promulgating the general principles of our government, analogically to shew, that to the present system we owe our present happiness; and that the attempt to vilify *that* one part of it, is a slow, but perhaps a sure method to undermine and destroy the whole.

To pursue this speculation with effect, it was necessary to observe upon the parties that agitated the political world, and the opinions that floated in men's minds from the time of the Reformation: and he found that much of the evil that has abounded, had arisen from the misapplication of two terms, *Religion* and *Liberty*, in the last and present centuries. I say the *terms*, for the persons that used either to excite an ebullition in the public mind, were acquainted with little more than

than *the words*, at least it does not appear that they paid a proper respect to *the things*; as it is well known that they made religion a cloak for hypocrisy, and, at last, murder; and in our time, the word liberty has been as much, and in another kingdom as dreadfully perverted. And it is also well known even in this, that many a man has secured individual, by bawling for public freedom.

Exulting in the thought, that the schemes of false patriots against the real liberty of this age and country, have been hitherto frustrated, he congratulates his countrymen that it has been owing to the exercise of that good sense, which he says, and I firmly believe, abounds in this island; and which it hath been the peculiar care of Providence to disperse so generally, amongst the middle and lower orders of our fellow subjects, who have, perhaps, more than any people on earth, been assailed by the united efforts of a party remarkable for a combination of talents, and those dangerous powers of elocution, which hath, both in ancient and modern times, among nations *less firm*, been the cause of the subversion of governments, and the destruction of millions.

A strong instance of the operation of that good sense to which the Author alludes, has, since the publication of this pamphlet, been given, in the general conduct of the people, upon the two bills lately passed into laws; for although many interested and factious individuals have endeavoured, perhaps, for *election purposes*, to render them odious to the public, and standing on a pile of misrepresentation which they had artfully raised, have with renewed activity held them forth as the watch-words of a party, and endeavoured to move heaven and earth in opposition to them; yet the "quiet good sense" of the people of England hath repelled all their exertions, and silently refuted all their arguments. The operation of these acts hath already, and will in time still more strongly shew

the futility and falsehood of the philippics that have been advanced against them. It will shew that this mountain of mischief, which has been stated to impend over our heads, is to be dreaded by none but those whose consciences tell them that they deserve to be crushed by its fall!

Here we see the advantage, which, as he says, "fortunately" for us, the people possess in all public matters," and which surely it is no treason to state "as a gentle and useful sway," nor to wish "it may ever be maintained"—but although this sentiment can meet with no objection, even by the greatest enemies of the work, I think it may serve to be drawn forth as a part of the context for a purpose that will soon appear; it may serve to shew that the Author considered the people, with whom he unquestionably connected their representatives as *a branch* of considerable importance; as possessing a gentle and useful sway, and able *upon true revolution principles*, to resist encroachments upon their understandings or liberties.

An Englishman, therefore, thinks more of the civil liberties he enjoys as a member of the community, than of his political, from which he perhaps derives the advantages he is in the habit of partaking; but the care of which, if he is *uninfluenced* by those whose interest it is to warp his mind, he leaves to his representatives, as his *good sense* tells him that much of the licentiousness and disorder of former times hath arisen from an abundance of legislators, who nurtured in the *hot bed* of party, undertook to make or reform governments, without being either by nature, education, or habits of life, fitted for such elevated pursuits.

That the general tenor of an Englishman's ideas run more in favour of a monarchical than a republican government, is a position which I should suppose will not be controverted. It requires but a very slight knowledge of the history of this island to know, that that hath ever been their opinion, without
ascending

ascending so high, as perhaps the fabulous period of *Samothés** or *Brutus*; it is well known that *Cesar* found kings upon his arrival, since he is very liberal in bestowing that title, and tho, their number was afterwards curtailed, it is certain that even when the Romans abandoned this island in the 5th century, they left kings behind them. The Saxons had kings as well as the Britons; the government of the Danes who succeeded them, was monarchical, and so downward, excepting during the usurpation that succeeded the great rebellion, to the present hour. Nay, even in that period, disgraceful to the history of the 17th century, the *protector* who knew the inclination of the people to monarchical government, in order to render his own permanent, was obliged to assume the distorted likeness of royalty, to sway the land with an iron sceptre, and to act in a manner that was far more tyrannical than that of any king, or perhaps any usurper, *before the era of the French revolution*.

“The English,” says the Author, “have a natural modesty,” which disposes them to fill that place in society which Providence has allotted them, and pay that voluntary respect to their superiors, which in other countries is the effect of legal and coercive restrictions. This is not only obvious in their general character, but hath a good effect upon particular habits. An Englishman, is perhaps the last person that can be brought to have a good opinion of his own virtues or talents. He seldom thinks himself fit for more than one thing. A Frenchman thinks that he is fit for every thing. The one pursues his business, his studies, his profession, with the most sedulous attention, and very frequently arrives at a perfection which he is equally sedulous to conceal; while the other skimming over the surface of the sciences, has, without touching one, as frequently the art and effrontery to persuade

* Said to be cotemporary with Nimrod.

his friends, and even the public, that he has attained to excellence in all.

This opposition of modesty and effrontery, which so strongly marks the character of the natives of the different sides of the channel, hath been obvious of late in the effects which the equalization doctrines have had in these different countries.

In England, although levelling principles were promulgated with zeal and activity by a party, who, though Britons in appearance, were Frenchmen in their hearts; yet they were received by the great mass of the nation, with horror and disgust; because, as the Author observes, the good sense of our countrymen told them, that we had all the equality we could enjoy, in the participation of *laws* and *rights*, while in France, the overbearing character of the nobility, that arrogance which I have remarked is the characteristic of the nation, first inflamed their combustible spirits, to which the writings of philosophising system-makers added fuel, and thus working upon the minds of an irritated people, produced that confusion which the rest of Europe hath long deplored.

In praising the virtues of our countrymen, the Author does not forget the tribute that is certainly their due for their love of quiet.—“*Give us peace in our time,*” says he, is the language of our prayers, and how much this love of quiet, this desire rather to reform than to *root out*; to convince by reason, than oppose by violence, is the general tenor of the conduct of the nation, the observation of every one will convince him. If it was necessary to recur to instances, need we go any further than to the patience with which the lovers of the present monarch and government have borne the load of obloquy which hath been cast upon them. It is well known, such was their *love of quiet*, that they never attempted any opposition to the nefarious measures entered into by our *gallic Britons*, our conventions, corresponding conventicles, and affiliated

filiated societies, till they attempted to extend their fraternizing embrace, from Johnny Grots to the Land's End. It is well known that reams after reams, were published, that government was purified, reformed, vilified, directed, and, in short, attacked on every side, both in pamphlets and newspapers—till sarcasms upon *every* part of the machine became as plenty as *assignats* in France, before a pen was drawn in its defence.

The band of writers that ranged themselves around the throne and parliament, rested upon their arms, and observed a flight of quills that darkened the air, nor did they aim a single shot at them, till the poison in which they had been dipped, began to spread to a degree that was alarming; to a degree that aroused the *good sense* of the nation, and caused not only individuals, but counties, cities, towns, parishes, &c. to resign the habitual love of quiet upon which the author hath so ably expatiated; and uniting in one phalanx as firm as undaunted, oppose their shields to the hostile attempts of the *journeymen* to the national assembly and convention. The success with which their exertions were attended, is too recent to require repetition, nor would it have been mentioned had it not seemed still to have corroded the minds of *some persons*, and to have been productive of much of the harshness and asperity with which the supposed Author of the pamphlet I am examining, hath been treated.

Whether that harshness toward the supposed Author has extended to this work, I shall not take upon me to say; all that I wish is to offer my sentiments upon the tendency of it, which I conceive to be not only politically innocent, but morally useful, and this I also conceive may be the opinion of many.

There is surely no harm in praising a man, or a set of men, for being patient and forbearing towards their governors, for
 putting

putting the fairest construction upon their actions, and even should their jealousy be excited, for preferring their love of peace and quiet, to tumult and commotion, as it is certain, that upon all occasions, good sense is the securest armour, and it is far better to reason than *to resist*.

There is, I believe, in all men who *truly* love and value the government by which they are protected, a frame or temper of mind, which may be called *state jealousy*—This I know has been *affected* by modern patriots, but far from allowing it to operate in the extended sense to which they apply it; namely, to cavil at and thwart every measure that is undertaken whilst *they are out of place*—I believe in sober and well regulated minds, it goes no further than to make them apprehensive of every tendency in the people, or in any particular members of the community, to endanger or disturb that form of rule that is established by the laws and customs of their country. So far is this political jealousy to which the Author alludes (page 8) necessary, so far it is guided by good sense; under what or whose direction it is when it proceeds further, it would be useless here to enquire.

The national character of Englishmen, upon which I have ventured the few preceding remarks, may be properly considered as an exordium to the work; the Author now proceeds to what I term an *historical* consideration of the nature of the English government. Speculations of this kind have been so common in every nation, ancient and modern, into which letters and arts have found their way, that it would swell this pamphlet into a volume, were I barely to mention the names of the writers on this subject. No one has ever found fault with *Aristotle* and *Cicero*, though they lived in countries under a democratic government, and who were unquestionably the greatest statesmen and most consummate politicians of their times; or *Polybius*, the most impartial historian that any age hath

hath produced for becoming theorists, and speculating upon government. Nay, even preferring that which, like ours, consisted of three branches, the Regal, the Noble, and the Popular, though totally different from that which had obtained in the countries in which they resided.

*Plato and Plutarch** are decidedly in favour of pure Monarchy; yet having had the good fortune to live in an age when the parties, if any there were, were only emulous which should render the greatest service to their country; when the end of all was the same, and men were too sincere to cavil about the means, their writings have escaped the censure which the *Areopagus* or the *Senate* might, had any of the leaders considered them as *officiously* loyal, have passed upon them.

Leaving therefore the ancients with these few observations, as I should consider it a waste of time to endeavour to prove what is so well known; namely, that there was among them as many opinions upon government as there were sects; let us turn our eyes to the moderns, and enquire if their ideas upon the same subject, were more consonant to each other. Certainly they were not; on the contrary, if the life of man were long enough to search the volumes that have been written, to study the systems that have been erected, or to endeavour to understand the speculations that have been offered, he would find that instead, as formerly, two or three philosophers joining their talents to throw a light upon the subject, the modern innovators, individually pursuing the *ignis fatuus* of constitutions and governments by different ways, and that many of them have been led astray, and bewildered in the research. In short, he would find that scarce any two of them held the same opinion.

* 'Tis the first and most fundamental law, that he that is able to protect is a *King* by nature to him that needs protection.—PLUTARCH.

Machiavel, who was, I believe, more than suspected of a conspiracy against the *Medicis*, and who, for the constancy with which he endured torture, was rewarded with the post of secretary to the *commonwealth*, was, as the French Convention have lately been, a great admirer of *Brutus* and *Cassius**. His maxims have by some been esteemed as the essence of politics, and by others reckoned extremely dangerous.

The character of *Bacon*,

“ The greatest, brightest, meanest of mankind,”

as a political writer, is well known; as are those of *Hobbs* and *Filmer*; but although, perhaps, their opinions were all equally wrong, they certainly were considerably different. The latter, in his work, endeavoured to prove that, “ by the laws of God “ and nature, Kings, and particularly those of England, were “ invested with absolute and unlimited power.” This doctrine, to which the known constitution of the country, and the experience of every day, would have been the best confutation, raised up a host of answerers. Men of genius, from *Sidney* down to *Paine*, have exercised their talents on the opposite side of the question; and every one’s recollection will serve to point out to him tracts, in which the republican principles have, without any regard to their own safety, been carried to as great a height as it was possible for the authors to carry them. It is pretty certain, that the tide, since the revolution in 1688, has run in favour of the latter kind of publications. However the Whigs of that day might pride themselves in the share which they had in that glorious event, their successors have not always taken the pains that they ought to have done, to inform us what *Revolution* they met to celebrate. Nor do they seem very nicely to have discriminated

* Which makes it probable that he was not entirely innocent of the crime laid to his charge, I mean the conspiracy of the *Soderini*.

between

between *Revolution* and *Republican* principles. When they drank "the cause for which *Hampden* bled in the field and *Sidney* on the scaffold," I must confess, so contracted is my understanding, that I could only affix that obvious meaning which the plain common sense of the words pointed out. To the *milliards* of pages, whose tendency was the same, I have ever given the same interpretation, and so, unquestionably, has the Author of "*Thoughts upon the English Government*," who seeing the constitution assaulted on every side, by doctrines big with all the mischief of anarchy and civil war, and bleeding at every pore, by the *bullets* or daggers of incendiaries, hath endeavoured to explain the nature of that compact which stood upon a pivot; to shew the brilliancy of that gem, which the dregs of Gallic and English ink had, in some degree, obscured, and to call upon the *good sense* of the nation to restore it to its pristine lustre.

It is not a very easy matter for a man of genius, whose feelings are irritated, from knowing the effect which particular doctrines have had with a certain description of persons, and the zeal with which they have promulgated them, to sit down coolly to his desk, and weigh his words with the accuracy of a judge delivering a charge to a jury. It is not very easy, when the poison hath been so liberally dispersed over the land, exactly to proportion the quantum of *antidote* that may be necessary to counteract its effects. It is very natural for a human mind, possessed of generous feelings, to endeavour to exalt, what its antagonists have endeavoured beyond all bounds to depress. This I believe to have given rise to the passage in pages 12 and 13 of the pamphlet, which hath been censured, and which I take to be the only words that the utmost ingenuity of construction could in the smallest degree consider as hostile to the truest revolution principles, for this good reason, as, had there been any other, it would have

been equally the duty, *as it doubtless would have been the inclination* of the censurers, to have drawn them forth upon this occasion.

Were I inclined to defend the obnoxious pages by analogy, I might find abundant examples in the speeches of advocates, whose learning, and the brilliancy of whose talents I enthusiastically admire; in which speeches, doctrines which have long weighed down the opposite scale have been not only defended, but applauded. I might say, that when a trunk had shot forth two fair and goodly branches, to sever one of them, in order to transplant it into ground where it might flourish alone, while the populace made perhaps a bonfire of the parent and the other branch, was what I conceive has been attempted; and not only the trunk, but the *noble* branch of it hath been hacked and hewed without mercy, and though some of the offenders have been taken, few of them have been punished; because in some places they have met with defenders who have entered into their cause with the zeal and spirit of confederates. But I wave all these observations, to make one of more consequence, namely, that it is impossible to imitate the pedant in *Hierocles*, and judge of the strength and beauty of a mansion by a single brick. We do not appreciate the merit or the principles of a work as we do the value of a sack of corn, by a small sample. It is upon record, that the *Whole Duty of Man* has been turned into a libel upon particular personages, by writing their names in the margin of the passages that were admonitions against such and such sort of vices. Against such criticism no author, ancient or modern, could stand; a genius expert at it might prove *Homer* a block-head, *Aristides* a scoundrel, and *Tillotson* an atheist.

Let me now quote a few lines from page 11, in order to shew that the meaning ascribed to the author in the obnoxious passage alluded to, can only, if at all, which I much doubt, be affixed to it, when it stands alone, and is totally done

done away by taking with it this part of the preceding context—

“ Accordingly,” says he, “ the King can *enact* no laws without *the advice and consent*, not only of the Lords *spiritual and temporal*, who are in some sort counsellors of his own choosing, but also of the *Commons* in Parliament assembled; and the jealousy with regard to property has been such, that in devising this measure the subject has suffered a guard to be put upon himself; for the *Commons*, who are to advise and consent, are not the people at large, nor are they chosen by the people at large, but they are the *Knights, Citizens, and Burgeesses*, who are respectively chosen in *Counties, Cities, and Boroughs*, by persons of substance and sufficiency, who may safely be trusted with a charge where property is in question.”

In this passage the power of the three branches of the legislature is recognized and combined, and the dependence which they have upon each other, clearly and fully stated. A man who had sat down to exalt one part of government upon the degradation of the other two, would, it must be allowed, have taken a very preposterous method to execute his design, had he began by equalizing them, by shewing that they were the efficient pillars of the same fabric, and that the whole building rested alike upon *each* of them for support. He has already explained (page 4,) the gentle and useful sway which the people possess in public matters; and so far is he from supposing the *Monarch* can for a moment stand alone, that he asserts, in direct terms, that he cannot perform any of the legislative functions without the advice and consent of the *Lords* and *Commons* in Parliament assembled. Nay, in the next passage he goes further, and says, “ In this manner is the King’s power qualified in making the laws; his power in executing the laws is also qualified, by joining grand and petty
“ juries

“juries in the administration of justice with his judges. To these two controuls on the power of the king, must be added a principle which gives the nation another security for the due exercise of kingly power; for though the king *can do no wrong*, yet if wrong is done by the application of the king’s power, *as he never acts without advice*, the person who advises him is responsible to the law.”——

I would here pause one moment in order to ask, if the most violent Whig could have written a paragraph in which the constitutional balance, to which we owe our present happiness, could have been more fairly and clearly stated?—Is it pretended, or insinuated, that the king can either suspend, or dispense with laws without consent of parliament? Are not the independence of judges, the interposition of juries, fully recognized? “These adjuncts,” says he, “are subsidiary and occasional:” and so unquestionably they are!—Parliaments may be interrupted by prorogation or dissolution: the courts of judicature are at some times of the year shut, but the king’s power is a *substantive* one, always acting *by his officers* for the good of the community.

Having made these observations, which I thought necessary in order to introduce the obnoxious passage, and which I would wish the reader to keep in his mind, as he proceeds, I shall take up the paragraph, which appears to me in the light of a metaphor, founded (as metaphors always should be) upon a true assertion, namely, “the Government of England is a monarchy.”—Who will say it is not? Had he termed it an Aristocracy, or Democracy, he would have been equally right; because every one knows, that they are its component parts. Then why term it only a Monarchy? Why not say, as it really is, that it is a mixt Government composed of the three? Because it is generally supposed, that the monarchical part of it is the most ancient; because we read of kings long before parliaments

parliaments are mentioned; and because, as he hath before stated, in the king's name is every operation of it performed.

We now come to the metaphorical part of the sentence.

"The monarch is the ancient stock from which have sprung those goodly branches, the Lords and Commons*, that at the same time give ornament to the tree, and afford shelter to those that seek protection under it. But these are still only branches, and derive their origin and nutriment from their common parent; they may be lopped off, and the tree is a tree still: shorn indeed of its honours, but not like them cast into the fire." Here ends the metaphor, of

which the reader will see the idea was introduced into the author's mind by the consideration of genealogical tree, such as we have often seen with an armed knight at the root of it, from whose bowels issued a trunk from which sprung branches loaded with the goodly fruit of *Peers* and *Commoners*. Considering monarchy† as the original of all government, it may well be compared to a trunk, and the branches to the lords and commons; but, says he, "they derive nutriment from

* The power of creating peers and summoning parliaments are, it will not be denied, among the most ancient prerogatives of the crown.

† When mortality fell upon mankind by the vast inundation of waters, by the pestilence, barrenness of the soil, or other adventitious causes, such as we have understood have been, and fear may be hereafter, so that the arts of life and life itself were lost, yet after a time when men have again increased, as it were, from the few grains of seed that remained, it hath been found necessary for convenience and protection, that they should assemble together in communities; they observed the beasts of the field do the same: but the analogy did not strictly hold; large companies of men grew disorderly; it was necessary for the promotion of honesty and justice, to give one among them, perhaps the strongest, the father of the largest and most ancient family, or the most renowned for wisdom, the power to reward and punish, and from this root sprung monarchy.

Polibius, Lib. 6.

"the

"the parent stock," and so unquestionably they do. The branches of a genealogical tree are always supposed to have derived nutriment from the trunk; in pursuing this metaphor, he says, they may be lopped off. What? the branches! and the tree, though ragged, despoiled, disgraced, is a tree still; shorn of its honours, but not like them cast into the fire*. This, which must be understood as a flight of the imagination, can only be hypothetically explained.

Suppose some violent convulsion of the state should arise, such as have heretofore existed in the contentions between the barons and the crown, during the reigns of the three last kings of the Norman race, when the people, considered as vassals or villains, made part of the property of the lord, and were annexed to the land like the Russian peasants. It is well known that, during those times, the trunk has stood alone, and tho' shorn of its *honours* has still remained a trunk, and defied every storm that roared around it, while the dismembered branches, blown about in the contention, have been at one time borne aloft, at another swept along the ground, and perhaps at last a great part of them destroyed, or to use the author's expression, "cast into the fire." Suppose, as I have observed, these things to have happened more than once, is there any harm any treason or libel in metaphorically alluding to them. The boldest flights of the imagination, the noblest productions of

* The same kind of figure with respect to the tree is made use of by our Saviour in his sermon upon the mount, though he applies it differently, to guard the people against *false prophets*, who appeared in sheeps' clothing, but were in reality *ravenous wolves*.

"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is *hewn down*, and cast into the fire." St. Matthew 6, 7.

human

human genius, the best lessons ancient and modern, sacred and prophane, have come to us in the form of allegories and parables. A man may be a good politician who pursues his subject like a commercial traveller, and trots on at the rate of four miles an hour, he may perhaps the sooner arrive at the point to which he directs his exertions, but he will certainly be a dry which I call a bad writer. His labours may be approved, but they will never be admired. How much more fascinating are the effusions of a gentleman* who has contrived to render *even* politics entertaining, and who, amusing you as you travel through his pages at every turn of the road with objects equally new and beautiful, compensates, by the brilliancy of his imagination, for the disgust and horror which his subject has excited.

But to return to the passage which has been so severely censured, and in which my readers will see that though the first lines of it are metaphorical, the latter contains the moral or application of the *fable*†, and are so fully explanatory that it is impossible to mistake their meaning. "The kingly government," says my author, "may go on in all its functions, without lords or commons; it has done so for years together, and in our times it does so during every recess of parliament; but without the king his parliament is no more. The king, therefore, alone it is who necessarily subsists without change or diminution, and from him alone we derive the protection of law and government."

This passage has caused a considerable degree of triumph among many, whose political offences, in their writings, have

* Mr. Burke.

† I have heard of many who were great admirers of the *Cock and Swine*, the *Tree of Liberty*, the *Red Devils*, *Hogs Wash*, *Pigs Meat*, and a thousand of these elegancies, who thought this metaphor execrable. To them it seemed to want a certain *sal atticus* which only democracy can give.

been

been far greater than those of our Author, supposing him to be the man they mean, and to mean all that they assert. Considering him as the head of that sect, of which I profess myself an unworthy member, which hath been ludicrously denominated *alarmists*, they are ready to sing *Te deum* upon his fall and the degradation of the party. Glad as I am that a sour and discontented set can for a moment enjoy a gleam of sunshine that they can relax their features into a smile, and suffer the impulse of hilarity to penetrate their minds, I would not have them triumph till they have gained the victory, or to use a homely proverb: "halloo before they are out of the wood." Perhaps the *judicial* critics upon this passage, may look to the intention of the Author when he wrote it, and connecting his general character and the tenor of the work, consider whether his meaning could possibly be to vilify the two branches of the constitution, in order to exalt beyond measure the *trunk*: but if he did not mean that, what did he mean? perhaps some one may ask: To this if I was in a proper situation I should answer.

The whole work is an abridged history of the English government, and the effects which certain principles have had upon the general system, and the particular passage which I have quoted, is, in its former part as I have observed, metaphorical, and in its latter, historical.

"The kingly government may go on in all its functions, without *lords* or *commons*"—Why? Because it has done so for years! When? Here it will be necessary to recur to its source in this country. I do not mean previous to the arrival of the Romans, nor even during their possession of the island, for I have already observed, that the former part is so intermixed with fable, and the latter so connected with the affairs of the Roman empire, that it is impossible to disentangle them. The only mode by which we can guess at their system, is by looking

looking at that of other states, particularly their neighbours the *Gauls*, who, it is well known in times of exigence, vested the monarch with additional powers, *so that he stood alone*. Of this description no one has doubted was the government of the Britons, whose *kings* from *Casibelanus* to *Vortigern* are frequently mentioned, and that they had the disposal of the country, the lives and property of their subjects, there is every reason to believe.

However, we have been left in the dark during the long wars between the Saxons and Britons, with respect to the form of government of the latter; yet from the little light thrown upon the subject at different periods, we may gather sufficient materials to form a judgment that it was such as had anciently been established, namely, monarchical: for though we read the people sometimes assembled, first, in the reign of *Vortigern* and his son *Vortimer*, again to solicit *Ambrosius* their monarch to take up arms: at another time to elect *Arthur* king, and at subsequent periods, far distant from each other, it does not appear that these meetings formed any part of the constitution, but were the irregular assembly of the populace, whom the exigency of the times had collected, and who dispersed as soon as the measure that gave rise to their meeting, was in a train of being carried into effect, while the kingly power was a *substantive* one always acting and always acted upon.

The name of king was unknown to the Saxons in Germany. Their territories were divided into twelve provinces, over each of which a head or governor was appointed by the general assembly of the nation with whom the supreme power was lodged. This assembly was called *Wittenagemot**, and was in all probability the model upon which our parliament was formed. In time of war, the assembly elected a general, like a Roman dictator, to command the army, and to be the chief

* Assembly of wise men.

or head of the commonwealth : but when *Hengist* got footing in this kingdom, it appears he altered this form of government, and immediately after the battle of *Eglesford* (455) took upon himself the title of king, which was continued by his successors down to the time of the heptarchy, during which long period, of one hundred and thirty years, it does not appear that they sought the counsel of their *Thanes* and *Ealdermen*. It does not appear, nor indeed is it very likely in the confusion of the times, that they had recourse to the *Wittenagemots* : a circumstance one would have supposed no more than parliaments likely to be passed over if they ever had existed. But it does appear, that their monarch reigned *despotic* and *alone* ; and as a further confirmation, Rapin and other historians say, that after “ the Saxons, Jutes, and Angles, “ had been one hundred and thirty years in the island,” and conquered “ the best part of it,” “ then, and not till then,” “ looking upon themselves as one and the same people, as “ they had been in Germany, they established a form of government as like as possible to that which they or their “ ancestors had lived under in their own country. They “ formed their *Wittenagemot* to settle the affairs of the seven “ kingdoms about the year 587,” after which period they are mentioned separately in the English history.

Perhaps what I have already stated might be sufficient to satisfy the reader's mind of the historical truth of the assertion, that the kingly government has gone on in all its functions without *lords* or *commons* ; but it may still add weight to that assertion to observe, that it did so again during the reign of *Egbert*, who destroyed the heptarchy after it had existed two hundred and forty-three years, and with it the *Saxon laws*, *Wittenagemot* and every shadow of liberty, nor were these blessings fully restored till the reign of *Alfred*, who indeed

deed extended, modified, and made them almost what they now are.

Fearful of being thought prolix, I pass over the Danes, though every one in the least acquainted with our history will discern, I could find betwixt the reigns of *Edmund Iron-side* and *Harold*, sufficient matter to apply to my purpose. I come now to the princes of the Norman line, beginning with William the Conqueror, during the whole period of whose reign it is well known that the laws of *Alfred*, or, as they were more generally stiled, the Saxon laws, were suspended; though even his Norman adherents, who at first gloried in their dependance upon the king, but at last wished to secure the power and property they had acquired, tried to effect their restoration. It is not a matter of speculation, but certainty, that *William* governed *England* as he governed *Normandy*, without any check or controul upon his sovereign authority.

The same was the case with *Rufus*, except that he did what his father never did. He *promised* to restore the Saxon laws, which promise he never kept: he therefore acted *alone*, and consequently *despotic*.

Henry the first advanced a step further: he *promised* to restore the ancient government, which it should be remarked was the darling of the people, groaning not only under monarchical but subordinate tyrannies, and confirmed his promise by a *charter*; but he executed it no better than his brother. His reign may therefore furnish us with another proof to add to the many that I have adduced.

It would be equally nugatory and endless to pursue all the fluctuations of the people between monarchy and aristocracy, through the reigns of *Stephen*, *Henry* the Second, and *Richard* the First, till the barons extorted the signature of *Magna Charta* from *John*; or thence through all the struggles for power,

power, till the time of *Henry* the Fifth, at which period the privileges of parliament, were restored and understood, though they were frequently suspended, and both peers and commons sometimes *lopped off* from the monarch during the contention of the houses of York and Lancaster, and perhaps at subsequent periods.

The princes of the house of Tudor, grown wise from the contemplation of former misfortunes, found that there were better methods of governing parliaments, than by force of arms. Of what nature those methods were, history has left us in the dark: all that we know upon the subject is, what is sufficient for my purpose, that in the reigns of *Henry* the Seventh, *Henry* the Eighth, *Mary*, * and *Elizabeth*, there were long and frequent suspensions, in which the monarch acted alone.

The first parliament called by *Henry* the Seventh was eight days after his coronation; it met on the 7th of November, 1485. The principal business of it was to declare *Henry* a king *de jure*, as he was already king *de facto*, and to secure the crown to his posterity. When the judges had decided upon that in the following terms, "that the crown takes away all defects, and stops in blood, &c." he dismissed them. Here was a long *hiatus*, in which, although the functions of the peers and commons were suspended, those of government went on; for I find the next parliament was not assembled by the king, till the beginning of the year 1492. The chief business of this parliament seems to be the granting the monarch a *benevolence*; they were dismissed, as was the custom of the age in a very short time, and the government again reverted to the king. Three years after, viz. the

* Edward the Sixth dying in his minority, I have not thought it necessary to mention the transactions of the regency as an example.

13th of October, 1495, the king *called* another *parliament*; the next in 1504, which only sat, * till it had gone through the business of granting a subsidy to the king, and the bills against coiners and against giving liveries, &c. This was the last parliament in the reign of *Henry* the Seventh, who died the 22d of April, 1509; so that, if we compare the dates of the parliaments, † and the length of the suspensions, we shall find sufficient reason to justify the author of the passage we are examining, for *historically* asserting, “that government “may go on in all its functions without lords or commons, “*because* it has heretofore done so for years together.”

Henry the Eighth did not think it advisable to assemble his parliament till the 21st of January 1510, ten months after the decease of his father. Two years after, February 4, 1512, the parliament met again, in order to provide for the war which the king was about to enter into with France, and after a short sitting, they broke up, they were assembled again the 4th of November, in the same year; but did no more than grant the king a further subsidy and poll-tax for the support of the war. *Henry* having without cause declared war, did not chuse to call a parliament, to demand another subsidy; till having expended the vast sums left him by his father, together with all that he could illegally extort from the people, he was by necessity obliged to summon the great council of the nation.

This parliament met the 15th of April, 1523, above ten years after the dissolution of the other; and, not to tire the reader with matter which can add little weight to the authorities I have adduced, he will, if he refers to the history, see that there were considerable suspensions between the three parliaments

* Holingshead says, that there was a parliament in 1493, in which a subsidy was granted; but I find no other notice of it.

† Parliaments in these ages seldom continued more than one session.

of *Philip* and *Mary*, and also between the ten parliaments of *Elizabeth*, and that these suspensions justify the author of the passage alluded to in all that he hath asserted; though perhaps if I chose to urge it, a further justification might be found in the reigns of the princes of the Tudor line, from the little share that the two legislative branches seems to have had in the public transactions.

Thus much may serve to elucidate and prove, that the middle part of the sentence is as historically true, as the beginning is metaphorically so, and judging from what hath been, it certainly was a natural inference to state that such things, it was within the scope of possibility might happen again. Suppose, for instance, at some far, very far distant period, some ambitious and evil minded ministers, such as *Buckingham*, *Strafford*, and *Laud*, should arise, who should attempt what has been heretofore attempted, in the reign of the *royal martyr*, and should persuade some future king to suffer them to govern in his name without a parliament: we know that this, unfortunately for the former monarch and the country, hath not only been attempted but carried into effect: we know that government has, for a time, gone on in all its functions, without the assent of peers or commons, and knowing this, however, we may deplore the turbulence of such times, the ambition of such individuals, and lament the many causes that drove the unhappy Charles to such extremity, there is surely nothing criminal in alluding to them in the manner in which, I apprehend, the author alludes, and even by a parity of reasoning, to infer, that, however improbable, what has been may be again.

In this light I consider the paragraph as far as I have stated and observed upon it, to be the speculation of an ingenious mind, and, taking the context, and intention of that mind along with it, perfectly innocent. Had he asserted that the parliament

liament might exist without the king, or that the nation could be happier under the tyranny of a *protector* than the mild and limited government of a monarch, which if not asserted as I believe it to be, may be inferred from almost every page of the works, of Messrs. Paine and Co. nay had he even elucidated his doctrine, and warmed the hearts of his admirers with florid descriptions of the different *anarchies* that have subsisted from the wars of the Norman barons, to the grand rebellion of the last and the petty rebellions of the present century. Had he, as he might with truth, have asserted, that in the middle of the last age, the third branch of the legislature, rose superior to the other two, trampled royalty in the dust, tore mitres and coronets from the heads of their possessors, drove the *heir apparent* into exile, usurped his throne, and performed all the functions of government without the assistance of *peers* or *king*, and if he had added what has been may be again, let me ask the members of the *Whig-club* whether they would have thought him most deserving of praise or prosecution?

That the kingly government has in this island gone on in all its functions without lords or commons, is, I think historically certain. The monarch has for ye ars together, represented every branch of the legislature; and in our times, he does so in every recess of parliament. If there is any doubt remaining in the reader's mind that the former part of this sentence is a historical deduction, the latter would surely clear it. "The functions of parliament have been," says he, "in former times for years suspended, and at present are so during every recess; but without the king his parliament is no more."

It may perhaps here be said, that if the author means to recur, this position is not strictly correct, for the assembly, call it what you please, that acted during the first part of the usurpation of Cromwell, performed all the functions of a parlia-

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ment, as he in the latter performed all, *nay more than all*, the functions of a monarch : however taking it in a general sense, according to that legal fiction which supposes that a king never dies, and that the parliament does die, sometimes a natural, sometimes by dissolution a premature death, it is certain that the premature death of the parliament, if occasioned by the natural death of the monarch, who called them together, *his* parliament, that is the parliament he summoned is no more *. *His* parliament is no more, all its functions ceases, if bills are *in transitu* they must be begun again, every transaction in which its privileges, regulations, and internal government is concerned, and in short all and every public operation that has not received the sanction of the three branches of the legislature must be buried with it, and can only be revived by the new process of a new parliament, called by or renovated from, the members taking the oaths to the monarch who succeeds and who has been legally alive although his progenitor is really, and his parliament, *i. e.* the parliament that he assembled is metaphorically dead †.

The parliament, may therefore be considered as a fluctuating body subject to change, suspension and dissolution ; but the

* In the year 1696, soon after the attempt to assassinate king William, the commons brought in a bill for the sitting and continuing of the parliament, if the king should happen to die, till the next heir in succession should come to dissolve it, and that commissions should continue in force till the further pleasure of the successor was signified.

† Anne, and George the first, being empowered by the statute of William, quoted above, continued the parliaments that were sitting at the time they came to the crown. George the second dissolved that which was sitting, when he came to the crown, about a month after the death of his father, the parliament continued sitting after his present majesty took possession of the throne, but before the revolution, the death of the monarch was the dissolution of the parliament.

king

king certainly and necessarily, subsists, to perform the executive offices of government. He subsists, as the author rightly observes, without change or diminution, and from him, that is, as he has already stated, page 12, "from his officers and in *his* "name *alone* we unceasingly derive the protection of law and "government."

I shall here end my critique upon this paragraph, only demanding the privilege which every advocate claims of summing up the evidence I have adduced to prove the innocence of *the intention* of the author.

The first is the context ; I have already said and here repeat it, that the only judgment that can be formed of the principles and design of a writer, in any particular passage, is by connecting that passage with the preceding and subsequent parts of the work. Taking thus a general view of it, it will appear that all that the author intended, and had it not been for the circumstances in which it now stands—I should have apprehended all that could have been inferred from it, would have been that it was a harmless disquisition of the merits and properties of the English government, as operating upon the minds of the English nation : and if we consider how that said government hath been assailed on every side, by the specious and subtilized systems of self created philosophers, by the insidious acts of mob-created *patriots*, and *lately* in the person of the chief magistrate, by the infernal weapons of, perhaps, hired incendiaries, and journeymen conventionalists, we must allow that it must have possessed stability, efficacy, and energy superior to any other, to enable it to stand against those engines, and that therefore it is well deserving of a peculiar investigation.

Secondly, with this idea in the mind of the author, how was it possible he could reflect upon the hazards to which both the government and people have been exposed, without feeling

some little irritation upon the subject? The human mind, like a spring when wound beyond its bias, will recoil, perhaps, as much toward the opposite course, feelings highly wrought may perhaps in some passage of a work, however calm the general tenor of it may be, produce energetic language, and energetic language is frequently liable to two constructions.

Yet whatever meaning ingenuity may affix to the passage we are examining, I must still insist, that the fair, the plain, the obvious construction of it, is by a deduction from a metaphorical illustration to advert to historical facts, and by informing us what hath been, to endear the present system of government to our hearts, to caution us to preserve it as our most valuable treasure, lest in some future period such irregularities as have been should be again.

This I apprehend to be such a deduction as the premises warrant, therefore I shall only add, that in these times when opposite opinions have been promulgated and adopted, not alone by the vulgar and ignorant, but by men of talents and genius, it is impossible for us to be too guarded or cautious not to suffer a public prejudice or *personal animosity* to betray our judgment. When the two sermons* of Dr. Sacheverel were first introduced into the house of commons, and the obnoxious passages declared libels, it was observed, that Dr. Hoadley had preached and printed sermons which were as strongly libellous on the other side of the question; but the house was *so justly* irritated against the former doctor, that they passed over the

* One preached at the assizes at Derby, before the judges, grand jury, &c. Aug. 15, 1709; the other before the lord mayor, aldermen, common-council, &c. assembled in St. Paul's cathedral, to celebrate those two eminent preservations, the discovery of the gun-powder treason and the landing of king William, both sermons were printed at the desire of the congregations.

complaint against the latter, nay, they did more, for a member thought the *excesses* of doctor Hoadley so meritorious that he even moved the house to address the queen to give him some preferment, which motion passed in the affirmative: such a ferment had the slight examination of Sacheverel's sermons created in their minds, that they thought they could not do enough to express their approbation to the promulgator of principles as violent on the other side.

But to return to the pamphlet, in which I must again refer to a passage, in a page immediately preceding that which has subjected the author, whosoever he may be, to so much observation, he there says, "The king can *enact* no laws without the
" *advice and consent* not only of the *lords spiritual and temporal*,
" who are in some sort counsellors of his own chusing, but also
" of the *commons in parliament assembled*, &c. Such, in page
" 13, he continues, are the principles and constitution of the
" English government, delivered down to us from our ancestors, such they are demonstrated to be from the evidence of
" *history and record*, and such it is wished they may continue, by nine tenths of the nation."

No one will be so absurd as to suppose that the author of this appeal to the "quiet good sense" of the people, did not include himself in the *nine-tenths* of the nation, because through the whole of the work, he addresses the lovers of tranquillity and order, which is certainly not a description of the other tenth; because the whole tenor of it seems to be a desire to counteract the nefarious labours of this solitary tenth, and because this said tenth is neither thought to adhere to the king, nor to *be claimed by the church*.

There have been many among the critics upon this pamphlet that have accused the author of endeavouring to annex some improper idea to the word *constitution*, and to make a distinction

tion where there is, is fact, no other difference between that and government, than between the fundamental and the executive parts of the same system ; for my part, I am of opinion that if any improper idea, by which I mean a ridiculous one, can ever accompany the term constitution, it must be from its having been drawn forth, and hackneyed upon all occasions, by a party that I believe to have meant every thing opposite to what they professed. It has like the word *liberty* been, if I may be allowed the expression, *travestied* by being joined to persons and things beneath its dignity, and as has happened to the sublime poems of Homer and Virgil, ridiculed by being annexed to common ideas, and placed in improper situations.

What can be more absurd than the idea of a *constitutional* patriot, can a man be a patriot and not constitutional ? “ A “ *constitutional* magistrate is another phrase—a *constitutional* “ whig, a *constitutional* club, where the *constitution* is supported “ by a good dinner, where *constitutional* toasts are drank, and the “ next day promulgated to the great edification of the public*.”

But to have done with this trifling ; every one knows that if we were to define the constitution, we should say that we mean whenever we speak of it with propriety and exactness†, that assemblage of laws, institutions, and customs, derived from certain fixed principles of reason, and directed to the public good, that compose the general system according to which the community hath agreed to be governed. By government we mean,

* It does not appear that the *king's health* is a *constitutional* toast, as it is not in any list that I have seen published of the *Leges Convivales* of the Whig-club.

† The *constitutions* of Clarendon, Hen. II. c. 3. were rules for the government, or rather regulation of churchmen and church matters, in Henry the first's time, they were called the constitution of the church, and a thousand instances ancient and modern, occur, in which the phrases are confounded.

whenever

whenever we speak in the same manner, that particular operation of laws, institutions, and customs, and that particular tenor of conduct which a chief magistrate, and other magistrates, under his influence and direction hold in the administration of public affairs. This is the general idea, yet it is well known that, the true distinction is often confounded, and the words constitution and government used indiscriminately by writers, and almost always in conversation, but it is impossible to suppose that a man who is a friend to *government* can be an enemy to the constitution or *vice versa*.

To the observations of our author upon the attempts that have been made, with what success is alas ! too obvious, to settle a *constitution* and promulgate *liberty* in France, surely no one can have any objection. He laments that conceited desire of interference, to use no harsher expression ; which is characteristic of the gallic nation, and which hath always led them to try to *convert* the rest of Europe to their tenets, whether religious or political, by formerly twining the gospel around their swords, and latterly, placing the cap of liberty upon their spears. From their example he takes occasion to warn his countrymen, and to inform them that, true " liberty is the reward of those " only who are just and good, and is to be attained only by " those who have" good sense " enough to understand it, and " to use it with moderation."

The next passage that strikes me is that which will be found at the top of the twenty fifth page, where the author says, " It seems to me, that most of the errors and misconceptions relative to the nature of our government, have taken their " rise from those two great events, *the reformation*, and *what is* " *called the revolution*." Exceptions have been taken to the words marked in italics, and it has been said, that he intended to convey to the mind of the public, a sarcasm upon that glorious

rious event: but if the reader refers to page the thirty-sixth, he will find that he stated the abdication of king James, and the transactions that ensued upon the vacancy thereby made in the throne; not as ridiculously, but improperly termed the revolution, because there is no legal authority for it. "It was not" says he "so named by parliament, nor is it a term known in our laws. This term had certainly no better original than the conversation and pamphlets of the time". It has by some political writers, of whom lord Bolingbroke is one, been called a new *Magna Charta*, and might perhaps, with more propriety be styled the *reformation* of government, in which the principles settled by *Alfred*, and restored by *king John*, are enlarged, renewed, defined, and confirmed.

The nation having derived such an immense benefit from the *thing*, it would be absurd to cavil about the word, had not the term *revolution*, like the term *constitution*, upon which I have before observed, been applied to principles and actions, which rather seem to look *forward* than *backward*, when they allude to that event.*

If
* From the statute the first of William and Mary, to which the author alludes, it appears that what is called the *revolution*, was only considered as a regulation of government, and a revival of laws and rights which had for nine hundred years formed the constitution of this kingdom. They had been promulgated before this statute passed; in the *declaration of rights*, and allowed long previous to that in the act of *recognition*, the first of James the first. The only novelty in this bill was the clause that says, "If any king or queen of England should marry a catholic, their subjects should be absolved from their allegiance, &c." It is well known, that Bishop Burnet in his *pastoral* letter wished to *normanize* the *revolution*, and give to William the right of a *conqueror*. Another pamphlet was published at the same time to the same effect, both were very properly consigned to the flames, at an

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If the admirers of the term *revolution*, mean by it that kings have abdicated, or deserted, or been driven from their thrones, every one knows that James was not the first monarch to whom such an event hath happened. There are many instances in the history of Europe in general, and of this kingdom in particular, yet I do not recollect that the term hath been applied to any one of them, notwithstanding which, as I have no doubt from the tenor of his work, that the author sincerely rejoices in the circumstance, he is too wise to object to, or ridicule an expression which has been generally admitted, if not in legal, in historical writings, and always in conversation; had not that expression been called forth and set up as a stalking horse, behind which, it is thought, the well wishers to a *revolution* in *petto*, have endeavoured to lurk. To unmask their battery, to drag them from their strong holds, seems to be his design, and in order to accomplish it, he is obliged to shew the causes that led to, and some of the consequences that have followed that event.

That modern patriots, forgetful of the constitution which had existed for more than nine hundred years, should only chuse to celebrate that which was established at the *revolution*, was an absurdity that struck the mind of the author, when he wrote the three words* that are the subject of this discussion, and knowing in fact that the term was misapplied, and that the constitution was not at that time formed, but only *brought back* to its original principles, he has guarded his expressions, and said with propriety, as I apprehended: "It seems to me that
" most of the errors and misconceptions relative to the nature

auto de fe, as heretical. There could certainly be no conquest where there was no *resistance*, and I much query if our ancestors foresaw that the seventh article of the bill of rights, would ever make it a *question of prudence*.

* *What is called.*

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“ of our government, have taken their rise from those two great events, the reformation, *and what is called* the revolution.”

That they have been misunderstood or misrepresented, he endeavours to prove, and in that proof commends the actors in them, who instead of conducting them as modern *reformers* and *revolutionists* have done abroad, and wish to do at home, “ proceeded in a way *truly English*, they applied their remedy as far as the disease reached and no farther.”

The long train of errors and superstitions, which the ignorance of ages had contributed to introduce and keep alive, fled before the sun of literature, which rose to illuminate the human mind, at the dawn of the sixteenth century. The whole system of usurped jurisdiction was destroyed, the church was fast bound to the monarch: that ancient fabric of government, the throne, resting now upon gospel and law, derived new strength and additional stability.

But alas! it was decreed that the government should receive a shock from what had been esteemed its main supporter! The persecution in the time of Mary gave rise to the *puritans*, whose history our author traces, and laments the dreadful effect of the republican principles, which they imported from the continent and introduced into this country, for the purpose of undermining and subverting “ the constitution of our government “ as established by law.”

To this part of the work there never has, nor never can be any objection, yet as an advocate, I think it necessary to make one observation, which may, perhaps, carry the reader's mind to the former; he will see that, however irritated the author might be at the events of the *democratic* times, and who can read of them without irritation? However he might deplore the delusion of the people, worked up to the highest pitch of *enthusiastic*

thufiaftic fury, by the exertions of religious and political *dema-gogues*; however his feelings might lead him to pity the monarch who fell a facrifice, and his exiled family, there is not a line, or word, that can be produced to fubftantiate the charge that hath been brought againft the paragraph, pages 12 and 13, of a wifh, (and fuch a wifh would not have been unnatural in the cafe of Charles, furrounded by a nefarious hoft) that the regal part of our government, might rife fuperior to the other two. This is not a mere affertion, whoever adverts to the pamphlet will fee, that the whole tenor of it will bear me out in it. They will alfo fee, that it is not againft the regular fystematic adminiftration of affairs, that his obfervations are directed, but againft the anomalies of thofe who wifh to undermine and fubvert “ the conftitution of our government, as eftablifhed by law,” who profefs themfelves difciples of that “ fchool, where the fovereignty of the people and *killing kings*, “ was firft brought into fystem, and hypocritically fanned “ by the dictates of the gofpel.”

That this fchool has produced the *republicans*, the *prefbyterians*, and other *feftarians*, and that their zeal, curbed and repressed after the reftoration, faw a happy occafion to exert itfelf from the infatuation of *James*, to a religion, the tenets of which were tyrannical, and to a ftring of words, fuch as *divine*, *indefeafible*, *hereditary right*, *paflive obedience*, &c. founds that contained no fenfe, at leaft nothing that could be made fenfe of by the *Englifh*, that they took the occafion by the forelock, and joining the moderate *Tories* and moderate *Whigs*, in which two descriptions were comprehended all the wifeft and beft people in the nation, and that this coalition produced, what is called the *revolution*, is well known. This, which the reader will fee is a fair ftatement, is, from the pamphlet, an abridged hiftory of that event.

To the former of these parties, which was known by the appellation of *Republican Whigs*, the Author assigns very different views from the other two, and I believe that many of the best historians are of his opinion; which appears to be, that these *democratic* philosophers hated the very name of monarch, and enjoyed the confusion of the times, in the hope it might lead to other innovations: "therefore," says he, "they invented the term *revolution* to blind and mislead, and they have never ceased repeating it, to put the people in "mind of making another."

Have not circumstances, actions, and events, given considerable colour to this assertion? Has not the same spirit with renewed activity been working amongst us? and does it not appear that the Author, who makes this *cautionary* appeal to the "quiet good sense" of his countrymen, so far from wishing any alteration in the present system, is anxious to prevent any derangement in the three estates, so as to impede their mutual operation for the advantage of the Public?

To those that have been in the habit of observing what slight causes have frequently given birth to important events, it is always a matter of apprehension, when certain words seem to be misplaced, misapplied, and drawn forth, to serve the purposes of a party. It is well known that every nation has a particular term, which serves as a signal of attack, and which is used to raise the spirits of the soldiers, whom it inspires with an emulation superior to that excited by the sound of the trumpet. This custom is not modern; we find vestiges of it among the *Greeks* and *Romans*; and it has obtained so much, that use has recently been made of the same expedient to stir up and excite the people to acts of tumult and desperation.

If we wished to seek for instances of the operation of this propensity, France would furnish abundance: nor has our
own

own country been barren of them. *Protestor* and *Abhorrer*, *Round-head* and *Cavalier*, *Whig* and *Tory*, are the terms by which our ancestors distinguished parties ; but we, *more ingenious*, no longer confine ourselves to generals, when we get a *watch-word*, such as *swinish multitude*, *perish commerce*, *acquitted felons*, &c. its meaning is instantly perverted, and it is bandied about from one end of the island to the other. Phrases of this nature are applied to persons or things ; but when we enlarge our views, and allude to events or describe systems, we say *Constitution*, *Revolution*, *Liberty*, &c. to which, in the mode we use them, no definite ideas are fixed. This the Author of the pamphlet has observed, and ably animadverted upon, with a view to bring the latter words to back their original signification, to rescue them from the disgrace of being connected with matters and things unworthy of their dignity, and ultimately to guard us against those who use them for *sinister* purposes ; in which class, I presume, he comprehends *revolutionary politicians*, and *constitutional lawyers*.

It would be nugatory were I much further to extend my observations, or labour to defend a fortress, that I by no means think vulnerable.

It is perhaps a consequential evil annexed to the blessing of freedom in this country, that it has always made it the *hot-bed* of party : but it is much to the honour of our humanity, that although we "sometimes wrangle when we should debate," it has not, in this century, arisen to that height, and been attended with those atrocities which have deluged with blood a neighbouring kingdom. In the last age we had, alas ! one dreadful instance of the madness of party rage and popular fury ; and in the civil wars of preceding periods, "peasants have trod upon the necks of nobles ;" yet the Gallic executions and proscriptions of one month, it is computed, amount to more than those which disgraced the long contention

tion of the houses of *York* and *Lancaster*; therefore we have every reason to dread the influence of *active spirits*, and the example of bad neighbours. * That the good sense of the nation has heretofore interfered and prevented such baneful effects, was obvious in the year 1792, when, as the pamphlet states, a considerable blow was given to party distinctions. At that time, when the alarm for the safety of the constitution spread, the whole kingdom became animated, and rose as with one accord, and ranged themselves around it. The ore was then separated from the dross; the grain from the chaff; and there are now, as the Author observes, “No divisions in the nation but that of the friends to the constitution as established by law, and that of the republicans, who are lying by for an opportunity to level every thing to the equality of French democracy; and there are no political opinions, by which men are distinguished, but those that are in favour of the constitution established by law, and those that are against it.”

Having now come to the conclusion of this history of the attempts that have been made to corrupt the old English government; and having made such observations, general or particular, as occurred to me in the perusal of the preceding pages, whether they will appear to be pertinent, I must leave to the judgment of the reader: nothing is more common than for men to see the same object in a different point of view, as passion, prejudice, party, and the events of the passing hour operate upon their minds. Firmly attached to the monarch and government, and being informed that this pamphlet was considered as an attempt to vilify both; for if one is degraded,

* The rebellions of the years 1715 and 1745, however their principles and effects were to be lamented, appear, both in their conduct and consequences, *mild* and *humane*, when compared with the *horrid*, *disgraceful*, and *sanguinary* events that have marked the *revolution* in France.

both

both must fall. I read it with a kind of *political jealousy*, but can find nothing **that**, in my opinion, justifies the charge. I have heard it given to a gentleman, to whose exertions, in the hour of turbulence, we are obliged for the quiet of the present, and when I connected the tenor of his conduct with the charge brought against him, it rendered that charge still more improbable. A man would be very unfit for the station *he fills*, or indeed any station, under Government, who should be weak or wicked enough to endeavour to remove any of the supporters of that fabric : but weakness or wickedness are improper terms, it must be absolute insanity, should *he* attempt to destroy a system which must crush him in its fall, and bury him in its ruins.

Leaving the Author, whoever he may be, to the censure or the approbation of the *legal* critics, who will soon give their opinion of his production, and who, I have no doubt, will not only consider a *particular passage*, but all and every part of the context, and making that allowance for the irritation which the democratic doctrines, * *that have passed uncensured* must have wrought in his mind, and giving that indulgence that all human efforts have a right to claim, namely, that the merits of the work be rated with its failings, will judge with coolness and impartiality. I therefore rest with the firmest confidence that the pages will pass the *ordeal*, and not only be considered as innocent, but *cautionary*, and in that respect useful.

* Paine's Dissertation on the First Principles of Government, &c. &c. &c.

